

age forty-seven is a great loss to music lovers worldwide, but those who knew him will not forget the joy and zest he had for life.

Robert was a natural leader who brought success and renown to the organizations he directed. In his early twenties, he served as vice president and general manager for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. By the time he was thirty-three, he took over the AMFS as president, and switched it from a fledgling event to one of the premier cultural festivals in the country. Most recently, he served as artistic director for Carnegie Hall, adding a new venue for more progressive performances.

During his twelve years with AMFS, Robert quadrupled the size of its endowment. This allowed for his undertaking the building of the Harris Hall and the Benedict Music Hall. He also established the American Academy of Conductors at Aspen, which provides opportunities for up and coming conductors from around the world.

Mr. Speaker, Robert Harth's death is a great loss to the Aspen community and for music lovers worldwide. It is my honor to pay tribute before this body of Congress and this nation to the life and legacy of Robert Harth.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SARAH
SWORDS ON RECEIVING THE
MARY P. OENSLAGER SCHOLASTIC
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate one of this years Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) Mary P. Oenslager Scholastic Achievement Award winners, Sarah Swords, who I am proud to say attended Princeton University in my district. The award is presented annually to college seniors who are blind and who have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, enterprise, and service to others.

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic is a non-profit organization based in Princeton, which has as its sole mission opening the pages of books to all people who cannot read standard print because of visual, perceptual or other physical disability.

Mr. Speaker, over the years RFB&D has worked hard to live up to the philosophy of its founder, Anne T. Macdonald, who believed strongly that "education is a right, not a privilege." Currently Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic has almost 240,000 titles available to its members worldwide. I commend Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic on the wonderful work they do, and I am so honored that they are located within my district.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege today to congratulate Sarah Swords one of the 2003 Mary P. Oenslager Scholastic Achievement Award winners. Having lost her sight when she was in the sixth grade due to a serious illness, Sara was fortunate enough to join Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic.

With the audiotapes RFB&D provided to her, Sarah was finally able to enjoy reading for the first time. "At last, I could read all the books I had always wanted to read" she recalls. "All the classics, novels, poetry and even magazines. I ordered a plethora of lit-

erature and have kept right on reading countless books." Sarah entered Princeton University in 1999 after finishing first in her class at Stoneman Douglas High School. During her time at Princeton University, Sarah was a member of student government, served as vice president of Delta Delta Delta Sorority, volunteered at the University Crisis Ministry, and helped out at the Trenton Animal Shelter. Sarah also worked as an advocate and speaker for disability rights for the Nassau Club, Princeton Alumni Organization.

Mr. Speaker, Sarah is a wonderful person whose talents and leadership have blossomed despite her disability. She is a role model for others in her community and a gifted scholar. I am so glad that through the good work of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic Sarah Swords will continue to be able to make significant contributions to our country and to the world. She is a wonderful example of why RFB&D motto, that "education is a right, not a privilege," is an essential truth.

Again Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Sarah Swords upon being selected as one of the 2003 Mary P. Oenslager Scholastic Achievement Award winners and I wish her the best in all that the future holds for her.

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a very important issue to me, and to the veterans in my district. As you may know, the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission recently issued its report to Secretary Principi. While the goal of the CARES Commission is to improve the health care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to our veteran population, I do not believe this report takes into account the legitimate concerns expressed by veterans in my District.

Specifically, the CARES proposal calls for the closure of acute medical care beds at the Aleda E. Lutz Medical Center in Saginaw, Michigan. The loss of these beds would be detrimental to level of care provided in the region.

Veterans in the northern portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan currently have only one VA facility that is accessible to them for inpatient care, the Saginaw VA Hospital. For veterans traveling from the rural portions of Michigan, getting to Saginaw can already be a difficult task. If the proposal is put into place, veterans seeking immediate care will face an unnecessary strain of two hours worth of additional travel.

I certainly understand that the VA is undergoing a change and trying to better fit its facilities with veterans' needs. However, it must do so in a manner that does not establish new barriers for veterans seeking care. Every remedy we propose must ensure that veterans know exactly where to go when they need medical care. Simply put, the solution cannot be worse than the problem. The VA hospital system was established to provide veterans, who have made great sacrifices for this country, with direct access to the care they deserve. We must not back down from that promise.

Veterans have come to rely on the services they receive at the Saginaw hospital, and they should not have to give that up. They have given enough already for this country, and I am unwilling to ask them for more.

I want to be clear: improvements can be and need to be made. Alternatives such as contracting with local hospitals is a promising solution. I also believe we need to pass H.R. 2379, the Rural Veterans Access to Care Act, introduced by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) and a bill I am a proud to co-sponsor.

This legislation directs the Secretary of VA to ensure at least five percent of the funds for Medical Care are used to improve access to medical services for highly rural or geographically remote veterans. It also allows VA approved veterans to enroll in a program that gives them access to routine health care from a local provider.

In closing, I would like to commend the administration for their dedication to working with this Congress to improve health care for our veterans. The reform of government and the services it provides is a thankless task, but one that is necessary for the well being of this nation.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MAYOR
WAYNE R. BROWN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to pay tribute to the life and memory of Marble, Colorado Mayor Wayne Brown who passed away recently at the age of seventy-six. Wayne was a true American patriot, and a beloved friend and colleague to many in his Colorado community. In his years spent in public service, Wayne embodied the ideals of integrity and courage that we, as Americans, have come to expect from our public servants. As his family and community mourn his passing, I believe it is appropriate to recognize the life of this exceptional man, and his many contributions to his community, state and country.

Mayor Brown lived an immensely rich and full life, always holding firm to his beliefs in serving his community and country. He worked for the Colorado Highway Department before he retired to Marble in 1983, where he served on the town board and later as mayor. His expertise in construction projects through his time spent with the Highway Department came to good use as mayor. Mayor Brown saw that the town had two needed bridges built across the Carbonate Creek and Crystal River, and most recently obtained the funding to pave the main road through town.

Mr. Brown's commitment to Marble extended to his involvement with numerous civic organizations. He was an active member of the Marble Community Church, the Association of State Highway and Transportation Organizations, the Colorado Mental Health Association, and the Elks Lodge.

Mr. Speaker, we are all at a great loss because of Mayor Brown's passing, but can be comforted in knowing he helped make Marble a better place for future generations. I would like to extend my heartfelt sorrow to his children, David, Daniel, Joseph, and Teresa; his